

I CORINTHIANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Corinthians chapter 6 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen, the first 6 chapters deal with problems within the church at Corinth and tonight, in the first 11 verses of I Corinthians chapter 6 Paul will deal with lawsuits, brethren suing each other, which seems well timed in the society we live in, where people seem to sue for anything and everything.

Did you realize that in the United States there are upwards of 20 million law suits that are filled each year! That is crazy, and I guess there must be money to be made because we keep filing them and, in the end, we lose out!

Let me share with you some crazy lawsuits and you will see what I mean. Here are just a few.

Animal Rights Group Sues on Behalf of Monkey for Ownership of “Selfies”

Bank Robber Gets Shot After Pointing Gun at Deputy; Sues City for Medical Bills

8-year-old New York Boy is Sued by His Aunt for a “Careless” Hug

Pennsylvania Nursing Student Fails a Course Twice and Sues the School for Not Helping with Anxiety

Two New York Women File \$40 Million Lawsuit Over ‘Like, Five or Six Scratches’ They Received From a Gas Explosion Blocks Away (They went out to explore what happened)

Colorado Inmate is Suing the NFL for \$88 Billion Over the 2015 Cowboy’s Playoff Loss

Florida Woman is Suing FedEx for Tripping Over a Package Left at Her Doorstep

An Officer in North Carolina is Suing Starbucks for \$750,000 Over Hot Coffee

Missouri Woman is Claiming Injury from a Flying Dinner Roll [She went to a restaurant that threw things]

California Woman Allegedly Fakes Coffee Burns and Then Sues McDonald's

- <https://abovethelaw.com/2015/12/top-10-frivolous-lawsuits-list-is-frivolous-but-funny/>

And now we see this happening in the church where more and more Christians are suing other Christians, and this should not be.

I heard of a Christian musician who was suing 5 churches for using his music without asking his permission which would include some kind of royalties.

I do understand that they need to make a living, but we spend thousands of dollars each year to play their music, to put their music on the air, to have their music on our internet feed and-so-on.

But this is not their music, it is what God has given to them. And it gets even worse and that is what Paul is addressing here.

You see, as Paul heard what was going on in Corinth with brethren suing brethren, he said beginning in verse 1 of I Corinthians chapter 6 . . .

I CORINTHIANS 6

VERSE 1

Notice how Paul opens this section up. He says, "**Dare any of you . . .**" Paul simply can't believe what these Corinthian Christians are doing. He is shocked by how brethren are treating each other in legal matters.

Keep in mind that the local judge sat in what was known as the “*bema*” seat of the civil magistrate, located in the heart of the marketplace.

And, because Greek culture found a good legal battle entertaining, anyone’s lawsuit soon became public knowledge.

Doesn’t that sound like our culture today! Look at all the television shows that are nothing more than court cases that are being aired so all can see.

And what we see here is that Christians were taking believers to court over issues, and Paul is telling them, with strong words, that this should not be the case, they should not be doing this.

Paul is telling them, and us, that you should not hang out your dirty laundry before the world to see and why are you taking these things to the unsaved, for in doing so you are seeking justice from people who are not even justified before God!

Don’t get the idea that the judges or the system was bad, even though at times they were. The point that Paul is making is they were not Christians and yet they are judging in these matters! That is what he means when he uses the term, “unrighteous.” It is not being used in a moral sense, but in a religious sense, these judges were not Christians as I have said.

Now let me say this so that you are not confused by what Paul is saying. Paul is not saying that we can’t use the secular court system at all. He is not forbidding that!

You see, there are times when Christians need to go to court. Listen to this and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Paul instructs the church to handle these standard issues internally. This instruction does not imply that all things that happen within the church are necessarily in-house issues.

Throughout history churches have made the mistake of trying to handle issues in-house that require the intervention of the authorities. If this had been an issue like embezzlement, abuse, sexual misconduct – any matter with actual legal ramifications – Paul would have called for the intervention of the authorities. The scope of the passage is limited to intra-church disputes that don't need to be elevated outside the community. . . .

- Stephen T. Um, I Corinthians – The Word of the Cross, pp. 103-104

If someone breaks the law, then they need to be dealt with according to the law, I hope that is clear.

Listen to what Paul says next.

VERSES 2-6

Notice the point that Paul is making here as he rebukes them. He is telling them that if they could not settle these simple issues between themselves, how will they judge the world, judge angels?

Now the Bible says we will reign with the Lord and that tells me we have such a close union with the Lord that as He rules, as He reigns, as He judges, so will we.

Who are these angels that are being judged? I believe they are the fallen angels, Lucifer and those who followed after him.

But keep in mind, here in the Corinthian church, there was much pride. They thought they had all this wisdom, but they didn't! (I Corinthians 1:18-31)

How do I know that? Because Paul, sarcastically, shows them that there was “**not a wise man among**” them!

Maybe you are not feeling very wise this evening and there is a problem with that. You see, our wisdom comes from the Lord and if you think about it, we are wiser than those with the education; those with the degrees, those that have the high IQ's.

Now that is shocking to some and it may even make some angry. But it is true. Make no mistake about it, the most uneducated saint can give a better judgment than the most educated unsaved person because the saved person has the Word of God illuminated by the Spirit of God to guide him and give him the wisdom in such matters.

Thus, Paul rebukes them for going to worldly courts to find solutions to their problems.

As the church becomes more and more worldly, we see the characteristics of the world being manifested in it. And that is not a good thing. Paul tells them, “**I say this to your shame.**” They gloried in their worldliness and Paul is rebuking them.

VERSE 7

Doesn't that just fit in with our society today! It is our rights, what we want, and in the end, we lose.

Notice what Paul is admonishing them to do here, “**. . . Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?**”

Now you may be thinking, “Hey, that is not fair. I am supposed to take a loss on this for the sake of the other person?”

Yes, and in reality, you will not lose by not taking your brother to court, you will win. You see, you can accept wrong for the sake of God's glory and do you really think you will be a loser? No way!

If the church can't settle the dispute, then don't take it to the courts to handle. Again, we are not dealing with issues of breaking the law, they do need to be reported and acted upon. These are issues within the church itself and not really legal issues.

Contrary to the world's standard, it is better to be sued and lose than to sue and win - spiritually, it is impossible for a Christian to sue and win.

One pastor put it like this,

“An attorney friend of mine says that over the years he has counseled dozens of Christians to drop lawsuits against each other. In some ninety percent of the cases he has been successful, and he reports that, without exception, those believers have been blessed. Also without exception, those who insisted on resolving their disputes in court became bitter and resentful - whether they won or lost their cases. If they went to court they always lost spiritually.” (Source Unknown)

May we be more concerned about our witness, that we glorify God in all that we do, and in the end, as much as we may lose according to the world's standards, we will win!

VERSES 8-11

You can imagine the displeasure that Paul had towards the way that the Corinthian believers were treating each other. They were dishonest with each other and Paul just can't understand that kind of living and being proud of living like that.

And keep in mind that Paul is not saying that you can lose your salvation if you don't live up to a certain standard. You see, we are saved by grace through faith and not by the Law through works!

What Paul is saying is that if your life is full of deceit, cheating, profiting off another, then your actions show you are not saved!

You see, our faith is not separate from our actions, but our actions flow out from our faith!

And notice what verse 9 says, "**Do you not know . . .**" In other words, "Guys, come on, this is the basics of Christianity! This is Christianity 101 and you still don't get it? What is wrong with you?"

And look at how Paul lists all those ugly sins and he is saying that our cheating and-so-on is just as bad!

FORNICATORS – This is speaking of sexual immorality in general and the focus is on unmarried people. Paul put it like this in Hebrews 13:4, "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**" I think that is clear and yet, Satan loves to come in and twist what God has said, and many have listened to him instead of the Lord!

IDOLATERS – This is not just speaking of bowing down and worshiping some image. It is speaking of any false religious system, any false gods in our lives. And that can be power, money, jobs, cars anything. We need to be careful.

ADULTERERS – This is speaking of married couples that engage in sex outside of marriage. And again, look at how often this happens in our society, even in the church!

HOMOSEXUALS & SODOMITES - For those who say Paul, or the Bible has nothing to say against homosexuality, guess again. Paul speaks of “**homosexuals**” or MALKOS, (mal-ak-os’) that speaks of male prostitutes in a homosexual relationship and “**sodomites**” or ARSENOKOITES, (ar-sen-ok-oy’-tace) which is a generic term for homosexual practices! And please don’t think Paul was a homophobe, for homosexuality was a common practice in Rome and in that culture. Think about how common it was. We see that 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were homosexuals and Nero, who was the emperor at that time and he was about to marry the boy Sporus, having him castrated so he could be his wife! Even in the Old Testament God condemned this practice. In Leviticus 18:22 we are told, “**You shall not lie with a male as with a woman.**” And yet, the church is embracing it today. Now some may argue that it is their lifestyle and who are we to say it is wrong? We don’t say it is wrong, God does, and God does know best. And for those who think you can’t come out of that lifestyle, we will see how Paul ends this section. It is far different than what some try to tell us!

One author sums it up like this, “Transvestism, sex change, homosexuality, and other gender perversions are included. God’s unique creation, those created in His own image, were created “male and female” (Gen. 1:27), and the Lord strictly forbids the two roles to be blurred, much less exchanged. “A woman shall not wear man’s clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman’s clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deut. 22:5). The Hebrew terms in that verse indicate more than clothing, and include any tool, implement, or apparatus.” I think that is very clear!

THIEVES & COVETOUS – These two go hand-in-hand you might say. You see, a person wants something, covets it, and then goes and steals what he wants. Coveting happens in the heart and stealing is the resultant action.

DRUNKARDS – Alcohol is not a sin but getting drunk is. And in our society, we have called it an illness, but God calls it **SIN!** We have done this with many sins today, made names that make them more tolerable, but God sees it for what it is.

Psychiatrist Thomas Szasz (one of the great masters in the field of psychiatry), in his book, *The Myth of Psychotherapy*, points out that through the acceptance of psychotherapy, **“We have turned the salvation of sinful souls into the cure of sick minds.”**

Look at what we have done, or I should say what the so-called “experts” have done, and we love it. We have redefined the acts of sin!

Adultery is having an “affair.”

Homosexuality is not evil it’s just an alternative lifestyle.

Drunkness is alcoholism, a social disease.

Pride is having a healthy self-image.

And **lying**, someone has suggested, is simply the result of an extravert with an active imagination.

Again, these “experts” have removed sin and in doing so they have removed man’s responsibility for what they have done! Be careful not to fall prey to what they are putting forth, listen to what God is saying.

REVILERS – This is speaking of people who destroy with their tongues, they use their words as weapons to destroy people. And this is an issue that comes from the heart and it needs to be dealt with!

EXTORTIONERS – This is speaking of a person who, by violent means, with the threats of harm or death to others, enriches themselves. Again, this is obviously so wrong and yet, this was happening in the church in Corinth!

And maybe you are thinking I am making too much of all this. I am not! Listen to what Paul tells us, that those who practice these things “**. . . will not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

So is this important? You bet it is and Satan has gotten people to downplay sin and in the end, they will die in their sins and be eternal separated from God. That is why it is so important to let the Word of God speak for itself instead of trying to downplay it or say what you think it means. God is very clear on this one!

Let me also say this. Paul is not speaking of a Christian who stumbles; one who falls into sin but rather a person whose life is characterized by these sins; they are not saved.

Now what should we do with these sinners?

Tragically, many people, many Christians hate them, but listen to what Paul says in verse 11 again, “**And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.**”

Paul is saying that we once were like that, but the blood of Jesus has washed our sins away.

We were once like that, but the Master set us apart for His use, He has sanctified us.

We once were like that, but we have been justified, declared innocent before God through Jesus Christ.

Thus, if that is where we once were, and this is where others are today, we should show them the love of God, the forgiveness of God that is found in Jesus Christ so they too can be washed, sanctified, justified before God!

This is from Ask John: ‘Can I be both gay and a Christian?’ question from May of 2018. Here is the question.

Dear John: I’m gay, but also a strong Christian. My major goal in life is to be as much like Christ as I can be.

I am struggling with the people around me. My family, in particular, thinks that all gay people are going to hell. I just don’t believe that the Bible says anywhere that being gay automatically means you’re going to hell. It’s not being gay that’s wrong; it’s having sex outside of marriage and engaging in unhealthy sexual behavior that’s wrong.

I guess my question to you is: Is it possible for me to have a gay relationship with another man, marry him, and still be a Christian?

If that’s not possible, then I want to move past this as best I can. But I also don’t want to feel like I’m lying to myself for the rest of my life. And I don’t want to marry a woman and then not be able to truly give her what she needs.

All of my worries and concerns about this are mainly due to the fact that I’m in love with my best friend. I can’t see myself with another person other than him for the rest of my life. I just want to be there for him through everything.

I don’t want anyone but him - but also want to serve God as best I can. Help, please. I’m really struggling here.

Answer: Of course you’re struggling. You were raised (I assume, given what you’ve told me about your family) to believe that the same God who made everything and everyone — including, obviously, you - finds you morally loathsome, *specifically BECAUSE of the way he made you.*

But . . . I could fashion a better God out of a sock monkey.

What would you think of a man who, because he loves dogs so much, adopts 10 stray dogs - and then decides that he so loathes dogs with different colored eyes that he starts kicking the [blankety blank] out of the husky he adopted, encourages the other dogs to harass and attack her, and finally takes a blowtorch to her, keeping her burning just enough so that she's in horrible agony, but not enough to actually put her out of her misery?

Would you think that man is a complete psychotic who needs to be locked away forever? Or would you think he's someone worthy of praise and worship?

Look: You're a gay man who's fallen in love with a man. But you are dedicated to serving a God whom you fear will (at best) reject you for that love.

This means you have three choices. You can stop being gay; you can stop believing in God; or you can stop believing in a God who is so morally bereft that he sends people to hell for being exactly the way he made them.

Those three choices are really only two, since (despite the barbaric charlatanism of "reparative therapy") a person can no sooner change their sexual orientation than a husky can change being bi-eyed.

So you either stop believing in God, or you start believing in a God who doesn't think that being gay is any more morally wrong than is being left-handed or red-headed.

(And, by the way, saying that gay sex is a sin only when it happens outside of marriage is saying that it's human lawmakers, not God, who determine God's morality. But . . . really?)

Bottom line: Of course you can be both gay and Christian. Millions are. And millions of straight Christians are perfectly OK with that. Such Christians simply interpret the Bible - which is nothing if not open to interpretation - differently than does your family. It really is that simple.

That reminds me of what the Serpent said in the Garden of Eden to Eve, “*Has God indeed said . . .*”

The Bible is clear, homosexuality is a sin, as well as many other things. We don't have the right to change that and if we do, we really don't change it. God will judge the person who continues in these sins.

And to say that you can't come out of that lifestyle, wrong! Many have! And please understand this. God did not make you gay, that was a choice on your part. It is as simple as that.

If that were true, that God created a gay person that way, then it is God's fault when He sends you to Hell because He created you that way!

Now only that, but if the homosexual was created that way, then what about the adulterer or the person who is a thief, or someone who does drugs or whatever. It is not my fault, God made me this way, and again, the responsibility is removed from the person and placed on someone else, this time it is upon **GOD!** How wrong that it and as Paul said, that those who practice these things, “**. . . will not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

Fee put it like this because there are many out there who say they are Christians, but they are living a lifestyle that is contrary to what God desires. In other words, there is no proof that they are saved! Fee wrote, “Security in Christ there is, to be sure, but it is a false security that would justify sinners who have never taken seriously ‘*but such were some of you.*’” Absolutely!

That is the way we were before we were saved, but we were washed, we were sanctified, we were justified in Christ and because of what the Lord has done on the inside of us, we live differently. Not perfect, but our actions reflect our love for the Lord!

In other words, a transformed life should produce transformed living. Paul is saying very strongly that it was unacceptable that some believers were behaving like those outside the kingdom. They were acting like their former selves. They were not saved for that, but from that.

One more point I want to bring out here and that is this. Paul also speaks of the Trinity here in verse 11. We see the “**Lord Jesus**” or God the Son; the “**Spirit of our God**” or the Holy Spirit; and “**our God**” or God the Father. One God manifested in three distinct persons!

VERSE 12

Make no mistake about it, the Bible is clear on this - we have Christian liberty.

But, the problem here in Corinth is they took it down a path that did not edify, did not profit them but put them into bondage and it seems like Paul is speaking of sexual sin here in these verses.

The Corinthian’s were going to prostitutes, which was a common practice in that culture, it was the norm you might say, but not for Christians.

Think about it, sexual sin is very enslaving and if you doubt that, just talk to someone who is caught up in this sin. It may have started out with porn movies, or porn magazines, or porn on the Internet, and when that was not enough, then it was taken to the physical level and now it consumes their lives.

Paul, in I Thessalonians 4:3-8 tells us, **“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”**

We must not use the liberty we have in Christ as a license to sin, God never intended it that way, and we do have control, it is the Holy Spirit working in our lives if we would only surrender to His control!

Let me ask you this. Have you ever heard a non-Christian say something like this, “You Christians are crazy! You have all these rules and regulations you have to follow. I am free, I don’t have anyone telling me what I can and can’t do!”

The funny thing is, the very thing or things that they believe have brought them freedom, have brought them into bondage! They are slaves to Satan even though they would deny that fact! You will serve somebody, and it may be the Devil and it may be the Lord, but everyone will serve somebody!

Think about those who are addicted to drugs. That which they thought brought them great joy, now has them in bondage and they can’t escape apart from Christ!

Again, think about the foolishness of what they are saying about us, about Christians. ***“Stupid Christians, Bible thumpers, always going to church, they can’t have any fun. They can’t get cirrhosis of the liver; they can’t get AIDS or gonorrhea; they can’t get addicted and go to the Betty Ford Clinic . . . poor dumb Christians - I’m free . . .”*** (Pastor Phil Ballmaier)

I think that sums it up nicely for us. Remember what Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1, “**Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**”

We have such freedom in Christ and yet, sometimes we let that freedom be the thing that puts us in bondage. When Paul says, “**All things are lawful for me**” he is not saying we can do whatever we want. I guess we can, but there are consequences to our actions.

Paul is not saying we can steal, commit adultery, and-so-on, not at all! In fact, when you look at that list back in I Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul is not saying we are free to do those things, that would make no sense! Those are the things we came out of, those things that had us in bondage and now we are free in Christ. As Jesus said, “**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**” John 8:36.

Then what is he speaking about? He is speaking of those things that are neutral, they are not a sin but if we do them will it benefit us or hurt us!

For instance, I do not drink alcohol. It is not that I can't have a beer, but for me, I just don't think it is right, and in my drinking, someone may see me, and it may stumble them. So the liberty I have in Christ says I can drink, but I choose not to drink, that is the freedom I have!

The key here is this. Is what I am doing profitable to me or will it hurt me? Morally neutral activities but choices I have to make in regard to doing them.

You see, I want to run this race for Jesus to win, not to lose! Paul put it like this in Hebrews 12:1-2, **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

Look at the examples of the men and women of faith that are found in the Bible and let them encourage you to run strong!

Don't be weighed down by sin, don't let sin ensnare you but keep your eyes on Jesus, the One who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith! Run with your eyes focused on Him and you will finish strong! It is when we take our eyes off of Him and listen to others, become distracted that we get tripped up!

Here are three things you can use to help determine if you should do something or not. And, with all things, seek direction from God through His Word and with His Holy Spirit.

THE UTILITY TEST – The basic idea here is this. Will it be profitable for me or will it hurt me? Will it help me to run my race for Christ strong or will it cause me to stumble, will it ensnare me? Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 6:12a, **“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful . . .”**

THE AUTHORITY TEST – Will what I am doing enslave me, will it bring me under its control? That is an important question to ask and to be open to what the Lord is showing you. We see this in I Corinthians 6:12b, **“. . . All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”**

THE CHARITY TEST – Will what I am doing hurt another Christian? Will what I am doing cause another Christian to stumble? Again, are we willing not to do something because we love the brethren and we don't want to hurt them. We see this in I Corinthians 10:23-24, "**All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.**"

Do you see how simple this is if we would only take the time to look at these things before we act on something! Our Christian liberty is so precious but don't let that liberty cause you to stumble!

VERSES 13-14

What we see here is a principle for sexual purity among Christians and the idea here is that our appetites for food and sex are not the same.

You see, the Corinthian believers used this phrase to justify their behavior. "***I need food for my body, to satisfy the craving, so I eat. My body is craving sex, so I go to a prostitute. It's the same thing, isn't it?***"

Paul tells them it is not the same thing, it is vastly different! You can't apply your need to eat with your need for sex, and yet, we seem to justify our sin so well!

Yes, God has given to us a sex drive, but Satan has perverted that and thus, don't go down that path for sexual sin does affect the body in a way that food could never. You become one with the other person, you are giving some of yourself away to them!

David Guzik put it like this,

Because of our lustful sexual appetites, it may seem that God *did* make our bodies for sexual immorality. But God did not make our bodies that way; sinful Adam did. We see the wisdom in God’s design for the body and for sexual purity when we look at the problems of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. These are the price one pays in the body for using the body in a way the Lord never intended – **the body is not for sexual immorality.**

- David Guzik

And then Paul says, “**And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.**” I Corinthians 6:14.

Think about that for a minute. What we do with these bodies does matter because one day the Lord will raise these bodies up. Yes, they will be new, without that flesh nature, but why would you want to fill your life with sexual sin knowing not only the Lord lives in you, but you are affecting these bodies that the Lord has given to you!

You see, what we do with our bodies in regard to food does not affect us in the same way as what we do with our bodies in regard to sex.

And Paul is going to continue with this thought of bringing sexual sin into our lives and what it does in our lives. Look at what he says next.

VERSES 15-17

Notice how Paul opens this up. He says, “**Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? . . .**”

Many of the Corinthian believers did not think their sexual conduct with prostitutes was such a big deal. They did not see that this affected their relationship with Jesus and how it affected others as well.

You see, because we are members of the body of Christ, what we do affects the body of Christ. Here sexual sin does affect us individually, and as a body.

Individually because when you have sex outside of marriage and even in marriage, you are giving a part of yourself to that person, as I have said, and you can never get it back.

Now in marriage that is fine, it is good.

But outside of marriage you are losing a part of yourself!

I like the perspective that Warren Wiersbe has on this issue. He tells us, “Sex outside of marriage is like a man robbing a bank: he gets something, but it is not his and he will one day pay for it. Sex within marriage can be like a person putting money into a bank: there is safety, security, and he will collect dividends.”

How true that is.

Also, in his book, the *Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis says that each time a man and a woman enter into a sexual relationship a spiritual bond is established between them which must be “*eternally enjoyed or eternally endured.*” How true that is. We need to be wise and understand that the Lord knows what He is talking about!

Since we are so linked together in the body of Christ, when an individual Christian commits sexual immorality, it disgraces the entire body of Christ, linking the body of Christ to immorality.

To put this into perspective, one author wrote, ***“Christ is not personally tainted with the sin, any more than the sunbeam that shines on a garbage dump is polluted. But His reputation is dirtied because of the association.”***

Remember, we are ambassadors for Christ, we are representing Him in this world and thus, may we shine for Him and not disgrace Him in the things that we do.

Don’t listen to what the world is saying, pay attention to the Lord, obey Him!

Let me share these statistics so you can see how much this is a problem in the church. And I don’t want you to focus on the statistics but understand there are people behind those statistics and it is not only their sin, but how their sin affects so many people.

We saw that with Willow Creek and what happened when Bill Hybles was accused by several women of sexual misconduct and he resigned, and things are in shambles there. It is a problem!

Shocking Statistics

Sex is the #1 thing people search for on the Internet.

There are over 420 million Pornographic Internet pages.

12 to 17-year old’s are the largest consumers of Internet pornography.

42.7% of Internet users view pornography.

The pornography industry is larger than the revenues of the top technology companies combined: Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix and EarthLink.

70% of women keep their cyber activities secret.

Women, more than men, are likely to act out their behaviors in real life, such as having multiple partners, casual sex, or affairs.

68 million porn search engine requests daily.

2006 Worldwide Porn Revenues = \$97.06 billion.

7 of 10 lay leaders in the church admitted to visiting adult Web sites at least once a week
5 out of 10 pastors said they did the same.

- Source: http://www.thealabamabaptist.org/print-edition-article-detail.php?id_art=3316

60% of all Christian men and 30% of all Christian women are addicted to pornography.

60% of the women who answered the survey admitted to having significant struggles
with lust.

40% admitted to being involved in sexual sin in the past year; and 20% of the church-
going female participants struggle with looking at pornography on an ongoing basis.

- Source: <http://christiannews.christianet.com/1154951956.htm>

It's more than statistics

It's people.

It's husbands, fathers, mothers, wives.

It's children, sons, daughters.

It's families, friends, co-workers.

It's churches, ministries, the body of Christ.

May we never forget that or lose sight of that. May we reach out in love and draw them
back to the One who loves them, Jesus.

What should we do? Paul will address that next and it really is not some deep theological
issue, it is pretty straight forward if we are willing to listen.

VERSE 18

Notice what Paul tells us to do here. He says, “**Flee sexual immorality.**”

Paul doesn't tell us to be brave and resist the lustful passion of sexual immorality, but to *flee* from its very presence.

Many fall because they underestimate the power of lustful passion, or think they will “test” themselves and see how much they can “take.”

But Paul is basically saying, “***RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!***”

Do as Joseph did when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. Remember, he ran away and that is a great lesson to learn regarding this issue!

Now let me also say this. Paul is not saying flee sex, an intimate relationship between a husband and wife, but sex outside of marriage we are to flee.

He doesn't say fight the urge, stand up to it, be brave about it, but flee it, run away from it for it is a powerful drive that the enemy will use to enslave us.

One Pastor summed it up like this,

I believe he is saying that, although sexual sin is not necessarily the worst sin, it is the most unique in its character. It rises from within the body bent on personal gratification. It drives like no other impulse and when fulfilled affects the body like no other sin. It has a way of internally destroying a person that no other sin has. Because sexual intimacy is the deepest uniting of two persons, its misuse corrupts on the deepest human level. That is not a psychological analysis but a divinely revealed fact. Sexual immorality is far more destructive than alcohol, far more destructive than drugs, far more destructive than crime.

Some years ago a sixteen-year-old girl came to my office in complete despair. She had committed so many sex sins that she felt utterly worthless. She had not looked in a mirror for months, because she could not stand to look at herself; and to me she looked nearer 40 than 16. She was on the verge of suicide, not wanting to live another day. I had a special joy in leading her to Jesus Christ and seeing the transformation He made in her life. She said, "For the first time in years I feel clean."

- John MacArthur

VERSES 19-20

Don't take this lightly. This is very important and yet for many in the church, they don't want to be bothered with what the Lord is saying here! I guess they feel that God wants them to be happy and sex outside of marriage makes them happy, that is what they think but in reality, it is destroying them!

First of all, Paul tells us that these bodies we have are the Temple of God! What does that mean?

A Temple is a place sacred to God and pure from immorality. If it is true, we are filled with the Spirit, this truth must influence our sexual behavior. And if we commit sexual immorality as Christians, we pollute God's Temple.

Not only that, but Paul says that we "**were bought with a price.**"

What did it cost Jesus to redeem us? His blood, His life and thus, live accordingly. Our bodies are the Temple of God in which the Spirit of God dwells in, thus, don't defile them with sexual sin or any sin!

Remember what Paul said in Romans 6:12-14, **“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”** Romans 6:12-14

Important lessons for us to learn and apply to our lives, especially in the days we are living in when sex outside of marriage is the norm!

I lot to take in and I am going to close with these words from Harry Ironside. You see, he was right when he wrote, ***“Glorify God in your body and the spiritual side will take care of itself.”***